

## Schools

Schools represent one of the most effective venues for childhood overweight initiatives because children spend almost half of their waking hours at school or in after-school programs. Students may eat breakfast as well as lunch at school, and often receive two-thirds of their daily caloric intake while at school. Additionally, schools may provide the only opportunity for regular physical activity.

Being healthy is the foundation of a child's ability to learn and succeed. Schools and communities working together can ensure that all children come to school healthy and ready to learn, and that good health habits follow them not only during their school careers, but throughout their lives.

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The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was established in 1946 to provide healthful lunches to children from low-income families and to encourage the consumption of US agricultural products. While school lunch programs must meet minimum dietary standards established by federal regulations, competitive food products in schools are unregulated in most states (*SC SDE, 2004*). As of last year, only 2 states have set nutritional standards for school lunches, breakfasts, and

snacks that go beyond existing USDA requirements (*TFAH, 2004*). Funding cuts to public education have resulted in the introduction of food products in schools that compete with meals provided by school lunchrooms.

National guidelines state that elementary school children should accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity every day since half of a child's day is spent at school, experts recommend that *at least* 30 minutes of this time be accumulated during normal school hours. This may include organized physical education (PE) activities or recess during school hours, intra-mural or extra-mural sports activities, unstructured playground activities before or after school or physical activity clubs.

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Estimates indicate that less than 16% of kids walk or bike to school, compared with about 50% just a generation ago. (EPA, 2003)

Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Travel and Environmental Implication of School Sitings, October 2003

There are barriers to children obtaining the recommended amount of physical activity at school. PE programs, at all levels, have been cut both to save funds and to provide more time for academic preparation and testing (SCSDE, 2004). One survey has shown that only 8% of elementary schools, 6.4% of middle schools, and 5.8% of high schools offer daily physical education classes at all grade levels for the entire academic year (IOM, 2005). In addition, fewer children walk or ride their bikes to school due to safety concerns and increased travel by car. Observational studies have shown that, because it represents a regular physical activity for large parts of the year, walking or biking to school significantly increases the physical activity that contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

In South Carolina, recommended efforts to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in schools have been outlined by the SDE. In 2004, a SDE Task Force drafted *Recommendations for Improving Student Nutrition and Physical Activity*. School Work Group members developed objectives and strategies to complement the recommendations in the SDE report.

The newly reauthorized Child Nutrition Act provides a federal mandate that reinforces the need for increased physical activity and improved nutrition during the school day.

Moving South Carolina children toward a healthy weight will require everyone's help, and schools have the opportunity to play an essential role. A comprehensive approach involving all levels of the SEM model is essential for impacting childhood overweight. Students, families, teachers, principals, school board members, and other decision makers must work together for this comprehensive approach to be successful.



## Examples of Activities

### ***Increase Opportunities for Students to Participate in Physical Activity During the School Day.***

The Child Nutrition Act, reauthorized by Congress in 2004, requires all schools receiving federal funds for foodservice programs adopt a wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. These policies must include items such as goals for nutrition and physical activity, as well as nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

(NASBE, 2004)

Partners will collaborate to establish a state level policy to require a minimum amount of minutes for physical education in schools. Additional opportunities for physical activity during the school day could include walking programs and recess.

Supporting Evidence: Community Guide to Preventive Services

*Goal 1: Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who meet the current age-specific recommendations for regular physical activity.*



## Examples of Activities

### **Implement Nutrition and Physical Activity Curriculum in SC Schools**

Training will be provided to schools on evidence-based nutrition and physical activity curricula, such as *CATCH*, *Planet Health*, and *Eat Well, Keep Moving*. This initiative will include train-the-trainer programs in school districts, along with evaluation and follow-up to determine implementation and technical assistance needs.

Supporting Evidence: *IOM*

*Goal 4:*

*Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who are at a healthy weight.*

### **Increase the Availability and Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables**

School personnel will receive training on ways to increase fruit and vegetable options, alternative venues for purchasing fruits and vegetables, and ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in schools.

Supporting Evidence: *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating.*

*Goal 2:*

*Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.*

### **Provide Education to Students and Families on the Importance of Achieving and Maintaining a Healthy Weight**

This initiative will help educate school nurses and physical education teachers on how to measure BMI in children; develop suggested procedures for schools regarding how to best communicate this information to parents; provide health education materials on maintaining a healthy weight; and develop a resource and referral list for families for students who are overweight.

Supporting Evidence: *TFAH*

*Goal 4:*

*Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who are at a healthy weight.*



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## **School Objectives & Strategies**

### ***Goal 1: Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who meet the current age specific recommendations for regular physical activity***

**Objective 1:** By December 31, 2007, at least 50 schools will provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity during the school day.

#### ***Strategies***

1. Establish/adopt state level policy that requires and funds Physical Education Program Assessment for grades K-8.
2. Establish state level policy that requires 150 minutes weekly of physical education in grades k-5.
3. Establish state level policy that requires 250 minutes weekly of physical education in grades 6-8 (NASPE's recommendation for Middle grades).
4. Establish state level policy that requires three Carnegie units of physical education for high school graduation.
5. Provide models for increasing PE time in grades K-8, middle and high school
6. Provide training to elementary schools to implement walking programs such as Duck Walking, Walk Across America, and Walk For Life.
7. Disseminate the SC Governor's Council on Physical Fitness' Recess Policy Statement to all middle and elementary school Principals.
8. Provide training and distribute model programs to middle and high school Principals for implementing intramurals, physical activity clubs, and physical activity elective courses into the school day.
9. Provide training to Physical Educators on implementing the SC Physical Education Standards and Assessment Program. (*Partner: SDE and SCAHPERD- SCPEAP*)
10. Provide training to district and school personnel on increasing physical activity opportunities into the core curriculum ("Take 10" program).
11. Increase the active time in physical education classes to 90% of class time.

**Objective 2:** By December 31, 2009, at least 50 schools will provide opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in physical activity at school.

#### ***Strategies***

1. Create a packet of model staff physical activity program ideas and disseminate these to all elementary, middle and high schools (or school districts).



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2. Provide presentations on staff physical activity programming at school related conferences (middle school, school nurse, etc.). *Work with SC School Administrators.*
  3. Provide school districts and schools with model policies and programs that encourage faculty and staff physical activity (such as the use of recreational/sports equipment in the school)

**Objective 3:** By December 31, 2008, increase in the number of children that will walk or bike to school.

### ***Strategies***

1. Work with YRBS or YTS to add appropriate question(s) to survey.
2. Identify schools in SC where it is physically possible and potentially safe to begin a Safe Routes to School Program.
3. Provide grants/resources to identified schools through the SC Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and the SC Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity to participate in Walk to School Day.
4. Disseminate information to all school Superintendents and Principals on the Safe Routes to School bill and Walk To School Day.
5. Provide training to school administrators on model policies and programs to implement a Safe Routes To School program.
6. Provide resources to identified schools on how to set up a SR2S committee at the SCCPPA Fall 2005 SR2S Conference)

**Objective 4:** By December 31, 2010, at least 150 school and community members will be identified as leaders in improving school physical activity.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide training to school administrators on the SC Physical Education Assessment Project at the SCAHPERD Conference
2. Provide a one-day training to potential school health leaders through the SC Healthy Schools Leadership Institute
3. Provide a weeklong training to school health teams for implementing the CDC's School Health Index through the SC Healthy Schools Summer Leadership Institute.
4. Work with existing awards processes to identify and recognize school champions (SC Governor's Council School Awards, DHEC All Health Team, SC Healthy School Awards).



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**Objective 5:** By December 31, 2010, at least 100 schools will provide opportunities for students to be physically active on school property before and after school.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide information, resource materials and training to schools on before and after school models for implementing physical activity clubs, intramural sports and extended use of school physical activity facilities.
2. Partner with after school providers such as the SC After School Alliance, AFHK, SC Recreation and Parks Association and the YMCA to adopt policies that require the incorporation of physical activity as a portion of their programming.

***Goal 2: Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.***

**Objective 1:** By December 31, 2008, at least 3 school districts will participate in a social marketing campaign to encourage students to consume 2 or more fruit and vegetable (non-fried) servings during the school day.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide training and resources for conducting an age appropriate social marketing campaign in schools, making eating F/V “cool”.
2. Provide resources to school on ways improve the packaging of available fruits and vegetables, making servings more individualized (cups of F/V that they can take, rather than being served, or single serving packages).

**Objective 2:** By July 31, 2009, at least 100 schools will implement the Five-A-Day programs in schools.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide training and share model programs to school personnel on the 5-A-Day campaign at the SCASA , School Nurses, SCAHPERD, Early Childhood and Elementary Education conferences.
2. Provide a one-day training to potential school health leaders through the SC Healthy Schools Leadership Institute.
3. Provide a 5 A Day training as part of the SC Healthy Schools Summer Institute.
4. Educate teachers on the variety of 5 A Day resources for use in the classroom.



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**Objective 3:** By December 31, 2007, at least 25 school districts will receive training on policies and other strategies for increasing the availability and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

### ***Strategies for School Meals***

1. Disseminate “how to” strategies to increase fruit and vegetable options including menu suggestions to district school food service directors, managers and staff.
2. Provide training to Food Service Personnel on the importance of having more fruits and vegetable options available and provide strategies to increase these options using model meal programs and marketing these options to students, staff and parents.
3. Provide training and ideas to above groups on how schools can afford more fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the school meal (school gardens, farmers markets)
4. Provide training on implementing school community gardens to interested teachers/ staff.

### ***Strategies for Other Foods and Beverages\****

\*Other Foods and Beverages refer to any food sold or served on school grounds outside of the USDA Reimbursable meal program.

1. Develop and disseminate model policies that increase the availability of fruits and vegetables (and 100% fruit and vegetable products) through all other food and beverage sales outlets.

#### **A. Vending Machines**

Distribute policy that assures that vending machines are stocked with fruits and vegetables and 100% fruit and vegetable products.

#### **B. A-La-Carte**

Distribute policy that assures that all fruit and vegetable components of the school meal are available to purchase as a-la-carte.

#### **C. Concessions**

Distribute policy that assures that fruits and vegetables and 100% fruit and vegetable products are sold at concession stands.

2. Disseminate model programs that increase the availability of fruit and vegetable options for students. (This includes 100% F& V juice products)

#### **A. Vending Machines**

Provide information about model vending programs that increase fruit and vegetable options while maintaining profit margins.

Provide information to Principals and District personnel on negotiating vending contracts that provide healthy choices, including fruit and vegetable options.





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**B. A-La-Carte**

Disseminate model school food service programs that increase fruit and vegetable options on a-la-carte offerings.

**C. Concessions**

Distribute model guideline and suggestions for having F/V available at concession stands, school stores and other school sponsored events

**D. Fundraisers**

Distribute ideas for selling fruits and vegetables as fundraisers to Principals, PTA/PTO and booster club leaders

**E. Parties**

Distribute model guidelines and suggestions for having F/V available during parties and class rewards

***Goal 4: Increase the percentage of South Carolinians who are at a healthy weight.***

**Objective 1:** By December 31, 2008, at least 100 schools will implement proven, effective nutrition and physical activity curricula.

***Strategies***

1. Provide training to schools on proven, effective nutrition and physical activity curricula (*Planet Health, Eat Well, Keep Moving and Color Me Healthy*).
  - Provide Train the Trainer programs in school districts and regions
  - Trainers provide training on curricula to teachers.
  - Teachers implement curricula in schools.
  - Evaluate and follow up to determine implementation and technical assistance needs.

**Objective 2:** By December 31, 2008, at least 25% of students will consume three or more servings of calcium rich low fat dairy daily.

***Strategies***

1. Partner with AFHK
2. Partner with milk bottlers to improve the packaging of 1% or less milk making it more appealing to students.



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**Objective 3:** By December 31, 2008, at least 70% of students will report eating breakfast.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide parent and student education regarding the importance of breakfast.
2. Provide information and technical assistance to school food service personnel and principals on alternative breakfast delivery strategies such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go stations and the Universal Breakfast Program.
3. Provide marketing strategies to schools to promote eating breakfast.

**Objective 4:** By December 31, 2009, at least 300 schools will adopt the SDE Task Force Recommendations for improving student nutrition and physical activity.

### ***Strategies***

1. Provide all school principals with a copy of the SDE Task Force Recommendations.
2. Develop a rating system to award schools that have implemented the recommendations.
3. Adopt state level policy that establishes nutrition and physical activity standards for k-12. Refer to the SDE Task Force on Improving Student Nutrition and Physical Activity and work with the Legislature or the State Board of Education.

**Objective 5:** By December 31, 2008, at least 150 schools will provide education and awareness to students and parents on the importance of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

### ***Strategies***

1. Include BMI fields in the SASSI reporting system
2. Educate school nurses and PE teachers on how to measure BMI and record in SASSI.
3. Develop a local resource and referral list to give to families of students who are overweight.
4. SDE in conjunction with partners will develop suggested procedures for schools regarding communication of BMI and suggestions for reaching and maintaining a healthy weight to students and parents.

